

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 10, 2007

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT ASSIGNS 17TH CIRCUIT CHIEF JUDGE KATHRYN E. ZENOFF TO APPELLATE COURT

The Illinois Supreme Court on Wednesday assigned Seventeenth Circuit Chief Judge Kathryn E. Zenoff to duty in the Illinois Appellate Court, Second Judicial District.

The assignment is effective May 10, 2007 and continues until further order of the Illinois Supreme Court.

Chief Judge Zenoff will be filling the assigned position currently held by Circuit Court Judge Frederick J. Kapala, who was recently appointed as a federal judge in the Northern District Court of Illinois.

In a statement, Illinois Supreme Court Chief Justice Robert R. Thomas said about Chief Judge Zenoff's assignment: "Judge Zenoff will make an outstanding addition to the appellate court. She possesses a sharp legal mind, and is universally respected for both her leadership and her vision."

"Judge Zenoff has an extremely impressive background, with vast experience as a private attorney, public interest advocate, assistant State's attorney, and judge. In each of these endeavors, Judge Zenoff won the respect and admiration of all who served with her."

"As Chief Judge of the 17th Judicial Circuit, Judge Zenoff spearheaded several important initiatives, including the State's first pilot program in legal professionalism and civility, the Winnebago County Legal Self-Help Center, and the planning and development of the new Winnebago County Criminal Justice Center."

Upon notification, Judge Zenoff commented "I am honored by the assignment and look forward to the opportunity to succeed Justice Kapala and to serve in this new capacity. It has been a rewarding experience to act as Chief Judge of the 17th Circuit."

Also on Wednesday, the Supreme Court appointed Eugene G. Doherty to the Circuit Court vacancy created by Judge Kapala's Federal appointment. Mr. Doherty's appointment is effective June 11 and terminates December 1, 2008.

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Judge Zenoff's service on the bench dates back to August 1995 when she was appointed to serve as an Associate Judge in the 17th Circuit. On June 1, 1998, Judge Zenoff was appointed by the Illinois Supreme Court as a Circuit Judge in the 17th Circuit, and in November 1998 was elected as Circuit Judge. In November 2004, Judge Zenoff was retained her position as Circuit Judge with voter approval.

In December 2003, Judge Zenoff was elected as Chief Judge by vote of the 17th Circuit Judges, a position she has held ever since. Prior to being named Chief Judge, Zenoff also served as Presiding Judge of the Criminal Division in the 17th Circuit from 1998 to 2003.

As Chief Judge, Zenoff has also been the 17th Circuit's representative at the Illinois Conference of Chief Judges, where she has served as Chair of the Specialty Courts Committee and New Chief Judge Orientation Committee, and as a member of the Jury Panel Representation Committee, Probation Committee and on the Committee to Revise the Chief Judges' Manual.

Judge Zenoff is also a member of the Illinois Supreme Court Committee on Professional Responsibility, the Illinois Supreme Court Committee on Probation Funding, the ISBA Task Force on Children's Waiting Rooms in the Courts, the Illinois Judges' Association, as well as the Illinois State, American and Winnebago County Bar Associations.

During her tenure on the bench, Judge Zenoff has presided over traffic, small claims, divorce, adoption, misdemeanor and felony cases. She has presided over numerous jury trials, and for the past two years, has presided over the Therapeutic Intervention Program (T.I.P.), Winnebago County's mental health court.

In 1996, Judge Zenoff facilitated and chaired the Children in our Courts Project of the 17th Circuit, work that resulted in the creation of The Kid's Place in 1997, a free and supervised drop-in center for children whose parents or guardians are on business in the courthouse. Additionally, in June, 2003, Judge Zenoff facilitated and chaired the Community Mental Health Task Force, which resulted in creation of the T.I.P. Court; and in 2006, was instrumental in the creation of the 17th Circuit Pilot Project on Civility and Professionalism.

Judge Zenoff has been involved in numerous civic organizations and received recognition for her volunteer work, including being awarded the YWCA Leader Luncheon XI Marcella Harris Award for Community Service in 1991, the Chamber of Commerce Forward Rockford Award in 1994 and the 2001 Athena Award for Effective Women Leaders.

Obtaining her B.A. from Stanford University in California in 1968, Judge Zenoff earned her law degree at Columbia University Law School in New York in 1971. During her legal career, she has practiced law at firms in New York and Chicago, and worked as a prosecutor in the Cook County and Winnebago County State's Attorney Offices. She is married and has two adult children.